

2013 Commuter Van Fare Increase Common Questions & Answers

When will fares go up?

- New fares take effect on April 1, 2013. For all commuter vans, this means bookkeepers start collecting the new fares for the month of April.

Why are my fares going up?

- Inflation has increased maintenance expenses and insurance—a fare increase is necessary to cover program costs and be in compliance with King County Ordinance.

What does my fare cover?

- Your vanpool fare covers the cost of the vehicle, fuel, maintenance, guaranteed ride home program, insurance, emergency roadside or vehicle assistance and support staff. The fare increase is necessary to cover program costs and comply with the King County Ordinance that requires our Commuter Van Program to recover 100% of its operating and capital costs and 25% of its administrative costs.

When was the last Commuter Van Program fare increase?

- It has been more than four years since the last fare increase in October 2008 when fares increased an average of 14 percent. Since then, Rideshare Operations has been doing what we can to make your fare dollars go farther by keeping costs down, streamlining maintenance and increasing efficiencies. As a result of these and other cost-saving methods, we were able to extend the time between fare increases and keep the increase to a minimum.

How much are fares going up?

- Commuter Van Program fares will increase an average of 5%. For instance, a rider in a vanpool that travels 50 miles round-trip with five other people should experience an average increase of \$1.58 per week or roughly \$6.32 per month. Vanshare fares will increase to \$185 per group—for vanshare groups with minimum ridership, this will be \$2 per person, per month. Please visit us online to find your newest fare schedule at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vpa/vanpool-accting.html>

Will there be more fare increases in the future?

- Additional fare increases are likely. Each year Rideshare Operations analyzes the amount of service, the quantity and cost of vans needed, and operating costs and administrative costs to determine if rider fares are sufficient to cover program costs and meet the fare recovery requirement.

How will the fare increase affect my employer-provided subsidy or pass?

- If your employer provides a vanpool subsidy directly to you, or participates in the *custom* ORCA Passport program, this increase may affect your commuter benefits. If your employer participates in the *standard* ORCA Passport program (under 500 employees) there will be no immediate change to your program.

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I purchased a Metro Vanpool/Transit pass on my ORCA card to help pay my vanpool fare—how will the fare increase affect this?

- Your pass will continue to be accepted at its current value towards your Metro Commuter Van fare (\$90 for one zone, \$108 for two zone). However, this will change with any future Metro Transit or partner fare increase.

How do I find out what my new vanpool fare will be?

- Talk to your bookkeeper to see if they have received a 2013 fare schedule. Find your van size, round-trip mileage and number of paying participants in your group to determine your individual fare. We have also posted the new fare schedules online at: <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vpa/vanpool-accting.html>

Did we need King County Council approval or a public vote to increase fares?

- A vote or Council approval is not required. To meet King County Ordinance, Metro's General Manager is given the authority to raise Commuter Van Program fares so the program (okay) covers 100% of its capital and operating costs and at least one-quarter of administrative costs.

Will I still save money by sharing the ride in a commuter van?

- Yes. King County Metro's Commuter Van Program remains a convenient, efficient, valuable, sustainable and money-saving transportation option—Even with a 5% fare increase, a typical vanpooler (50-mile roundtrip) can save an average of \$70 per month by sharing the ride in a full commuter van compared to driving alone – sharing the ride saves fuel, parking, mileage and maintenance costs and can save you time by being able to use HOV lanes and ramps.

What can I do to reduce my fare?

- There are many ways you can reduce your vanpool fare, including adding riders to your van, reduce round trip miles or merging with another group—the larger the van and the more paying participants, the lower the fare for everyone. We encourage you to visit our website at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vp-resources.html> to read our *Tips for a Healthy Vanpool* for pointers on how to attract more riders and lower your fare.

Where can I go for more information?

- We encourage you to visit our website at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vp-resources.html>. If you have questions, please contact King County's Commuter Van Program at 206-625-4500 or by e-mail at vanpool.information@kingcounty.gov

I'm a vanpool bookkeeper. Now what?

- Rideshare Operations Accounting Staff will be contacting bookkeepers shortly to provide specific details regarding monthly reporting. Please visit us online to find the newest fare schedules at <http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vpa/vanpool-accting.html>